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INDIAN MILITARY EXPENDITURE

A PAPER READ BY

Mr. D. E. WACHA

27793

BEFORE

THE DECCAN SABHA.

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INDIAN MILITARY EXPENDITURE

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INTRODUCTION.

AT this juncture when, in response to enlightened Indian opinion, as voiced by the people's representatives in the Viceregal Legislative Council in March last, the Government of India, in the Finance Department, is busily engaged in the arduous task of investigating into the details of our overgrown public expenditure, with a view to economy and retrenchment, it would not be unuseful to rivet public attention on one important branch thereof which now absorbs almost the whole of the net land revenue of the Empire. That revenue, according to the latest parliamentary return, stood in 1909–10 at 20·55 million £ or 30·82 crore rupees exclusive of that derived from forests. On the other hand, the net expenditure on military services, namely, the army, marine,

military works and special defence works, stood at 19·11 million £ or 28·66 crore rupees. Ten years ago, the net land revenue stood at 16·73 million sterling, while the net army charges amounted to 15·47 million £. Accordingly, land revenue has increased during the interval to the extent of 22·8 per cent. against military expenditure which has increased 23·53 per cent. If, therefore, we say that military expenditure has mounted during the period at a faster speed than land revenue, we shall be strictly giving expression to what is the bare truth. Of course, we are perfectly aware of the reasons urged in justification of the increase as more specifically outlined in the annual Financial Statement. But their soundness or unsoundness could only be ascertained by impartial experts outside the pale and influence of our Indian Military bureaucracy. None, however, will have the temerity to deny that sufficient grounds exist for investigation into the details of the army charges with a view to finding out how far there is room for substantial retrenchment. After all, it should be remembered that an annual heavy expenditure on an army on a warfooting in times of peace is really an economic waste. A poor country like India can never afford the luxury of such wasteful expenditure which at the best is unproductive and a great bar to that healthy economic development which the Government and the people are most anxious of promoting. It is said that the cost annually incurred on an army on warfooting is a good

"premium of insurance." But even such a premium, let it be borne in mind, has to be incurred in proportion to the ability of the country buying the security. There is such a thing as underwriting a remote risk at too exorbitant, if not "killing," rate. In ordinary life, no individual could afford to insure his life or property at a premium which he cannot afford unless he wishes to incur a heavy debt or go into insolvency. There is a certain well-defined limit in this matter. To go beyond it is in reality to waste the assets of a people. Accordingly, to maintain a costly army, in times of piping peace, on a warfooting, is really a policy of waste, altogether inexcusable in a country like India, admittedly poor in comparison with the poorest countries of the West. The expenditure so incurred could be more wisely and profitably utilised instead for the greater moral and material progress of the people. Scores of objects of popular utility remain unaccomplished by reason of the necessary lack of funds. But while funds in ever-increasing amounts have been and are invariably found for army expenditure, this excuse about the want of eternal pence for useful public objects is pharisaically urged by the Government—say, for such objects as education and sanitation and for the fostering and development of industries and manufactures which create wealth. The history of Indian military finance from 1885 to date furnishes the amplest evidence of the fact just stated. Look at the sums in increasing amounts annually spent on that expenditure and contrast them with those spent on pressing objects of

the highest public utility. As the late Sir Auckland Colvin and Mr. (now Sir Courtenay) Ilbert observed in their joint minute of dissent of 14th August 1885, a minute to which I have made reference at length in the sequel, "a standing army which is larger than is necessary for home requirements will be a tempting and almost an irresistible weapon of offence beyond the border." The imperative necessity under the circumstances of curtailing army expenditure on a war footing in times of profound peace must be apparent to any person who cares to bestow some serious thought on the subject. While the luckless tillers of the soil, to be counted by 20 crores, work hard, year in and year out, midst abundance or scarcity which spells their prosperity or adversity, and pour into the State treasury fully 30 crore Rupees per annum, the product of their incessant toil, here is the Government lavishing on its pampered army of only $2\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, a thousandth part of the agricultural population, the same 30 crores! and yet that authority is never tired of proclaiming *urbi et orbi* that the land revenue is the backbone of the country's finances! If that be so, do not commonsense and prudence alike dictate that such a backbone should be conserved and made stronger instead of being weakened and wasted in the manner that it is being constantly done? It will, therefore, be readily admitted, that no branch of public expenditure at this juncture stands in greater need of a fair and reasonable retrenchment than the overgrown expenditure of our army.

FULL INTENSITY OF GROWTH OF ARMY EXPENDITURE.

So far reference has been made to the fact of the growing army expenditure which eats away the substance provided for by the labour of the poorest masses, tillers of a soil far from rich. But this growth during the last ten years gives but an inadequate idea of the unproductive expenditure. If we are to emphasise the imminent expediency of retrenchment at this eventful crisis, when the Government finds itself at its wit's end to bring back an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure, we must travel back further afield and endeavour to apprehend the full intensity of the growth since 1885-86. That memorable year first saw the commencement of a new foreign policy, and, consequently, of that larger army expenditure which is now acknowledged in all disinterested quarters to be intolerable. During the preceding years, say, from 1861-62, the process of the consolidation of the Empire was going on. Retrenchment and economy of a severe type were strictly enforced, thanks to the economic conscience of such vigilant and argus-eyed watch-dogs of finance as Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook and Lord Ripon. The work of consolidation was fully accomplished by the year 1871-72. Between that year and 1876-77 the net army expenditure had averaged 14·50 crore rupees. During the next few years the country was unfortunately at war with the Amir of Afghanistan. It averaged 15·41 crore rupees. In 1880-81 it rose exceedingly high, say, over 21 crores, owing to the

disasters which fell British arms in the fresh campaign which had to be embarked upon by reason of the murder of Louis Cavignari, the British plenipotentiary at Kabul. The war expenses were all adjusted and paid for by 1882, when the Government of Mr. Gladstone gave a large contribution in aid thereof. Lord Ripon's Government, with Major Sir Evelyn Baring (now Lord Cromer) as Finance Minister, was able to bring back military expenditure to 16·50 crore rupees, after having given substantial relief to the taxpayers by a reduction of 8 annas per maund of the salt duty and by the abolition of all import duties save on liquor and arms.

The growth of the army expenditure then from 1884—85 may be exhibited as follows :—

	Crore Rs.
1884-85	17·05
1885-86	20·06
1890-91	21·09
1891-92	22·66
1893-94	23·53
1894-95	24·31
1898-99	23·05
1899-1900	26·44

It will be noticed that the first big jump was taken in 1885—86. From 17·05 crore rupees during the preceding year, it mounted up as high as 20·06 crore rupees which was an increase by one bound of fully 3 crore rupees. The year, it should be remembered, was the memorable one which witnessed

the warlike activity induced by the Penjdeh "incident" and the expedition immediately after that event to Upper Burmah for the acquisition of the kingdom of the ill-fated King Theebaw under divers hollow pretexts which might be profitably learned from the Blue Book on that subject. As if that increase of 3 crores was not enough the expenditure was allowed to run higher and higher till in 1899-1900, it rose to 26·44 crore rupees. In other words, in thirteen years more, the increase amounted to 6·38 crore rupees.

The next expenditure between 1900-1901 and 1909-1910, was as follows:—

	Crore Rs.
1900-1901 ...	... 23·20
1901-1902 ...	... 24·24
1902-1903 ...	... 26·44
1903-1904 ...	... 27·21
1904-1905 ...	... 31·03
1905-1906 ...	... 29·50
1906-1907 ...	... 30·25
1907-1908 ...	... 28·86
1908-1909 ...	... 29·40
1909-1910 ...	... 28·66

The annual average amounted to 27·87 crore rupees which is in excess of 1·43 crore of that for 1899—1900. But if we take that the expenditure fairly stood at 23·20 crore rupees at the commencement of the century, then the growth in the last ten years amounts to 5·46 crores or an increase of 54·60 lakhs per year! Thus, the real intensity of the growth

may now be gauged. In 1884-85, the expenditure stood at the reasonably moderate figure of 17·05 crores. In 1909-10 it stood at 28·66 crores or an increase of 11·61 or, say, at the rate of nearly 46·44 lakhs per annum. We might under the circumstances of the growth just described, very well presume, that were the Government to sound enlightened public opinion to-day by means of a plebescite on the particular expenditure which it should deem well suited for a substantial retrenchment, there could be no two opinions that it would be in favour of the overgrown army charges which absorb almost wholly the net land revenue of the empire. The industrious ryot is taxed in order to provide the needed "food for powder."

CAUSES OF THE INCREASE.

I have already observed that the colossal increase has been sought to be justified year after year. Divers reasons have been assigned for it; but the soundness or unsoundness thereof, I repeat, can only be ascertained by impartial experts. These increases have been incurred, according to the annual financial statement, for a variety of purposes, such as warlike expeditions on the frontiers and beyond the statutory boundaries of India as defined in the Parliamentary legislation of 1858 for the better Government of India; on the increase in 1885-86 of 30,000 troops, 10,000 European and 20,000 Indian, against which all India protested; on the construction of a larger number of military roads and defence works, apart from that of strategic railways, the cost of which is not included in the ex-

penditure; on continual better equipment so-called of the army in general by way of arms and ammunitions, —arms and ammunitions sanctioned and obtained to-day to be rejected as obsolete or not quite up-to-date to-morrow and the day after; on pay and pensions of the European branch of the army; on pay and pensions of the Indian branch; on mobilisation, the cost of which after being declared in black and white as non-recurring has been off and on incurred under a variety of pretexts, in hatching which the Military Department is, of course, an expert; on a score of minor objects of supposed military efficiency or utility; and, last, though not least, on what are known as the home military charges demanded in the spirit of Shylock by that masterful and omnipotent organisation known as the British War Office—charges or exactions of a permanent character, to be computed by lakhs of rupees against which the Government of India itself has repeatedly entered vigorous remonstances but in vain.

GROWTH DEMANDS SEARCHING SCRUTINY.

But be the reasons what they may, justifiable or unjustifiable, sound or hollow, there can be no two opinions that the army expenditure has steadily grown to a colossal figure and that at a faster speed than the growth of revenue which now demands the most searching scrutiny and overhaul for purposes of reasonable retrenchment and economy without impairing its efficiency, though unfortunately the public have never been informed exactly in what that efficiency is supposed to consist. Each Commander-in-Chief seems to have his own no-

tions of efficiency. What one militant Amurath has laid down as a standard of efficiency is rejected by his successor. Thus, the standard of efficiency has been a shifting one. It has fluctuated with the views of the head of the military department for the time being. Were the Finance Department to go minutely into the question, it is to be feared that it will have to lay at the door of this shibboleth of efficiency many an expenditure that has been wasted in the past. It is exceedingly doubtful whether it will undertake a task so disagreeable. We have a vivid recollection of the way in which the majority of the Welby Commission under the dominant influence of the War Office and Treasury officials who were its members, tried to explain away, most apologetically, of course, this branch of Indian public expenditure. Their report so far was extremely disappointing, nay, against the weight of the convincing evidence, submitted with a variety of statistics adduced by the Government of India itself, and, also against the weight of the evidence of the Indian witnesses and the Secretary of the British Congress Committee in London.

CRY FOR RETRENCHMENT FOR THE LAST MANY YEARS.

Now, it may be observed at this stage that the public demand for a reduction of the growing army expenditure is not a subject of to-day or yesterday. The Government has been appealed to and memorialised time out of number during the last quarter of a century. It has been *the one* theme of continuous agitation and discussion in the press and on the

public platform all over the country since the inglorious days of the Penjdeh "incident" and the forcible seizure of Upper Burmah. Many a leading public body has petitioned the Government here, and occasionally even that highest Court of Justice, the British Parliament, which unluckily for us has for years relegated to Providence the trust which Providence had confided to it for our better welfare and greater contentment. The Congress, too, as voicing all shades of responsible Indian public opinion, has, from the very day of its birth, continued to attract the attention of the governing authorities to the subject in its Resolutions. Again, in the Viceregal Legislative Council our representatives, from 1893 to date, have consistently protested against the growing expenditure and appealed for a reasonable retrenchment. It will be thus perceived how much this dead weight of the military octopus has been felt by the taxpayers and for what a prolonged period.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF GROWTH.

(1) Amalgamation Scheme of 1859.

(2) Change of Policy.

Without entering into the details of the growth or animadverting on the injustice or justice of many a charge, we may endeavour to ascertain the fundamental causes which have largely contributed to the expenditure which has now assumed such colossal proportions and which, if allowed to grow unchecked in time, is liable to plunge Indian finances in the most serious embarrassment. These are: (1) The

fateful army amalgamation scheme of 1859; and (2) the change of policy of the Government of India in relation to the frontier and transfrontiers since 1885. As to the amalgamation scheme, it is superfluous at this time of the day to describe it. Sufficient to say, it was forced on the Government of India in 1859 by the Home Government against the almost unanimous opinion of the most trusted and experienced British officers who had served for a lifetime in the army in this country, notably General Sir G. Balfour whose vigorous condemnation of it may still be read with profit in the evidence recorded by the East India Finance Committee of 1871–74. The net result of that fateful scheme has been that lakhs upon lakhs have been claimed and exacted by the British War Office for a variety of purposes, often of a most unfair and unreasonable character, which have from time to time formed the subject of vigorous remonstrances by successive Governments of India and by many a Secretary of State. These unjust exactions have not been a little fruitful in disturbing the estimates of Indian Revenue. And it is evident to those who have fully studied the financial evils of the greatest magnitude which have flowed from this onerous scheme during the last 50 years and more, that lakhs upon lakhs will continue to be claimed and exacted by the rapacious British War Office in the future till the hardened conscience of England in this matter has been aroused by some great parliamentarian in the House of Commons and the scheme knocked on the head.

Before the direct government of the country was assumed by the Crown in 1858, the European branch of the Indian army, it should be remembered, was partly recruited in this country and partly in England. Its combined strength at the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny was 39,375 British and 214,985 Indian troops. After the close of that Mutiny it was decided that the Indian army should be recognised on the basic principle of one European soldier to every two Indian. The entire organisation of the army was to be directed from England by the War Office. Whatever changes took place in the army organisation these had to be adopted here without one if or but, without counting their cost and without a consideration of Indian conditions which are so widely different from those of England. In short, the Indian Government was to be deemed next to negligible and the Indian taxpayer never to be thought of. Is it a wonder that such an one-sided and unfair scheme was condemned *in toto* by Indian military experts from the very day of the amalgamation? The exceedingly burdensome nature of the scheme was fully inquired into by the East India Finance Committee, consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament, who recorded evidence on Indian affairs from 1871 to 1874. No member thereof was more assiduous in getting at facts, and searchingly sifting them to the bottom than that great friend of India, the late Professor Fawcett. Sir Charles Trevelyan, who was Governor of Madras and afterwards Finance Minister in 1865, observed in his evidence on

the scheme, "it was based on a principle which has been found to be extravagant and crushing in practice." Mr. Fawcett himself, after having ably mastered the full details of this "extravagant and crushing" scheme, condemned it in the following scathing terms:—"A few years after the abolition of the East India Company, what is known as the Army amalgamation scheme was carried out in direct opposition to the advice of the most experienced Indian statesmen. India was then, as it were, bound hand and foot, to our own costly system of army administration, without any regard apparently being had to the fact that various schemes of military organisation which may be perfectly suited to a country so wealthy as England, may be altogether unsuited to a country so poor as India * * A partnership has been established between England and India and as one of the countries is extremely rich and the other extremely poor, much of the same incongruity and many of the same inconveniences arose as if two individuals were to join in housekeeping, one of whom had £20,000 a year and the other only £1000. An expenditure which may be quite appropriate to the one whose income is £20,000 would bring nothing but embarrassment to the one whose income is only £1000. The money which is expended may be judiciously laid out, but if the man with the smaller income finds that he is gradually becoming embarrassed with debt because he has to live beyond his means, it is no compensation to him to be told that he is only called to contribute his proper

share of the expenses. His position would be the more intolerable if, like India, after having been compelled against his wish to join the partnership he is forced to continue in whether he desires to do so or not."

FINANCIAL BURDENS OF THE AMALGAMATION SCHEME.

This, is exactly the position to which India has been reduced by the mischievous amalgamation scheme of 1859. It has been in force for 52 years during which many embittered controversies have taken place between the India Office and the War Office but in which the former has hardly been ever completely successful. Heavy claims, sometimes of a most irritating character, were preferred against India on which the Secretary of State had had to arbitrate with but little relief to the Indian revenues. More or less he was worsted by the masterful War Office with its clever "experts". Sometimes matters were of so delicate and complicated a character that a small departmental committee or a commission had to be appointed to settle the differences between the War Office and the Indian Government. One of such commissions was presided over by no less a personage of experience and influence than the late Earl of Northbrook who was Viceroy of India from 1872 to 1876. Of course, the claims of the War Office had been somehow arbitrated upon. But even then they were declared to be exorbitant if not "scandalous."

It would be asked what is the nature of the charges which have been so fruitful of a periodical investigation and the subject of so many indignant

and emphatic protests by the Government of India. These might be fully learned from the numerous despatches addressed by that authority to the Secretary of State as occasions arose. But I will give here some of the most important of them. (1) Capitation allowance; (2) depot charges; (3) transport charges; (4) store charges; (5) regimental pay of officers and soldiers and their allowances; (6) furlough charges; (7) field and ordnance arms and ammunition charges, (8) miscellaneous, and last though not the least, pensions to retired officers and soldiers. The total of all these, it may be mentioned, came in 1908-09 to 4·67 million sterling or, say, 7 crore rupees! But they were not half so burdensome 30 years ago, though even then, the Government of the day used to inveigh against it. For instance, in its despatch of 8th February, 1878, it was observed, "that placed as it was under the serious responsibility of so administering the affairs of the greatest dependency of the British Crown, that while British supremacy is strictly guarded, the means of securing that end shall not unduly weigh on the people of the country, it was constrained to represent to Her Majesty's Government that the burden thrown upon India on account of the British troops is excessive, and beyond what an impartial judgment would assign in considering the relative material wealth of the two countries and the mutual obligations that subsist between them * * All that we can do is to appeal to the British Government for an impartial view of

the relative financial capacity of the two countries to bear the charges that arise from the maintenance of the army of Great Britain, and for a generous consideration of the share assigned by the wealthiest nation in the world to a dependency so comparatively poor and so little advanced as India." Again, the Simla Army Commission, which was appointed in 1879 and presided over by so brilliant and able an administrator as the late Sir Ashley Eden, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and which counted among its members Colonel Sir Frederick (now Field Marshal Lord) Roberts and other experienced military officers serving in India, was constrained in its report to observe as follows :—Para 185 :—" We think that the position of the army employed in this country should be organised and administered with due regard to the interests of the people of India, and not for the purpose of supplying defects in the system of home defences, and above all, that it should not be made the means of obtaining, at the cost of India, advantages for the army at Home which do not entirely affect the interests of the country." In its Military Despatch of 22nd May 1879, the Government of Lord Lytton observed : " A large part of the Home expenditure is for pensions, furlough allowances, the overland troop transport service and stores. The remainder is for payments to the Imperial Government on account of Imperial troops which have been repeatedly investigated, but with results we have not been able to accept as satisfactory." Two years later, the Go-

vernment of Lord Ripon remonstrated on the burden of these charges on the following telling manner. Para 44 of despatch No. 401 of 1881 :—"It has to be observed that, whereas the British garrison in India has practically remained unaltered in respect of numbers and efficiency for many years past, its cost has been in course of constant increase from the various changes which have been made with organisation of the British army, changes made entirely, it may be said, from Imperial considerations in which Indian interests have not been consulted or advanced * * * It has to be remembered that charges which do not cause any very serious addition to the English estimates, and which are carried on without the least reference to India involve very much larger charges on the Indian revenues by reason of the much more liberal allowances enjoyed by officers in the country. The conversion, for example, of the first captains of Royal Artillery into Majors gives the officer so promoted an increase of 5 shillings a day in England; in this country the difference between the pay of a Major and a Captain of Artillery is Rs. 342 a month." Later on, Lord Ripon's Government followed its previous despatch of 1881 by another, of 21 Nov. 1884, in which it gave a succinct account of the principal increases in the Home military charges, from 1864–65, entailing on the aggregate a permanent burden of £ 800,000. The despatch said :—"These additional charges amount to more than 800,000 £ a year. Some of them were necessary for improvements;

others were imposed with little or no reference to Indian wants, and in most cases without the Indian Government having any voice in the matter."

To give a fair idea of the difference merely in the pay of regimental officers in the British and the Indian army, I would give authentic figures as were submitted in a series of statements to the Welby Commission by the India Office. These will at once inform you of the cogency and reasonableness of the main argument advanced by Lord Ripon's Government as just stated above, namely, that a single change in organisation or an increase of pay entails an enormous burden on Indian revenues which is hardly ever taken into account by the Imperial Government at home.

Monthly pay. Artillery.		
	British	Indian
Colonel Commandant	Rs. 883	910
„ „	„ 568	1665
Lieutenant Colonel	„ 589	1002
Major	„ 316	789
Captain, with higher rank	„ 263	417
„ without „	„ 231	417
Lieutenant after 10 years	„ 175	265
„ 3 „	„ 159	265
Lieutenant on appointment	„ 130	213

	Monthly pay. Cavalry.	
	British	Indian
Colonel	Rs. 950	1033
Lieutenant Colonel	„ 519	1437
Major	„ 393	809
Captain with higher rank	„ 289	503
„ without „	„ 289	503
Lieutenant after 10 years' Service	196	305
„ 3 „	196	305
„ on appointment	„ 178	250
Sub-Lieutenant	„ 132	250

	Monthly pay. Infantry.	
	British	Indian
Colonel	Rs. 888	918
Lieutenant Colonel	„ 422	1402
Major	„ 340	759
Captain with higher rank	„ 273	445
without „	„ 240	445
Lieutenant after 10 years' Service	170	256
„ 3	„ 153	256
Lieutenant on appointment	„ 133	202
Sub-Lieutenant	„ 136	202

It would be seen how costly was an officer of the Indian army in 1895-96, compared to that of the British. But costly as he was in that year, it is superfluous to inform you that he is even more costly to-day owing to the higher pay since allowed and at the lower exchange of 16 instead of 22*d*. The European

soldier, too, is similarly a costlier machine to-day than what he was fifteen years ago.

I may now quote another extract from the Government of India's despatch of 20th February, 1895, in which it discussed four ways of reducing military expenditure, but was perforce obliged to say that constituted as the army was, there was no hope of effecting "any material reduction of its expenditure." All that it can do was "to endeavour to restrict the increase of the cost of the army within the narrowest limits compatible with the maintenance of the peace and security of the Indian Empire." In this despatch, the Government further observed as follows in regard to the pay of the British troops :—"The pay of the British troops serving in India is not fixed by the Government of this country. It is fixed in sterling by the Majesty's Government and India has to pay in its depreciated currency an increasing number of rupees according as the gold value of the rupee diminishes. Moreover, nearly every alteration in organisation in the British army and changes connected with the interior economy of regiments and batteries have been productive of expenditure and have necessarily been followed by corresponding charges in expenditure on India." In the last 30 years the cost of these measures has amounted to £9,34,640, say, 1.40 crore rupees and this in one single item! But we all know that since 1895, the pay of the British soldier has been greatly augmented, so that to-day the charges under this head may be placed nearer at 2 crores at the least.

The two items of the pay of soldiers and officers of the European branch of the modern army alone show how crushing is the burden on the Indian revenues, thanks to the amalgamation scheme.

Another ever-increasing and ever-recurring charge is on account of war material. Science daily advances and with the progress of science what Gladstone called "the resources of civilisation," are also being vigorously forged. War is indeed a great misfortune. The expenses incidental to it are crushing for a poor country like India. But when a large standing army is permanently maintained on a warfooting, the expenditure, it will be readily admitted, grows intolerably burdensome. It practically runs to waste. It is tantamount to the destruction of so much of the national income. So that as army kept on warfooting in times of peace is not only burdensome but most prejudicial to the economic progress of the country. Next to the pay of soldiers and officers no expenditure is more costly than that of arms and ammunition. Science yearly forges new weapons of destruction, the basal principle being to devise instruments whereby the largest number of men may be killed in the shortest possible time. So that a dreadful instrument of this nature approved and adopted to-day, becomes obsolete tomorrow by reason of a new one which supersedes it. The Indian Government having been for years alive to this disquieting, if not troublesome, aspect of expenditure has no doubt established arms factories in the country itself where it can as far as possible forge all pieces of ordnance and

other smaller arms at a lower cost than that obtained from England. But neither the skill nor the resources available in the country can produce all that is wanted in order to save the cost of the heavy war material annually imported. These arms and ammunitions cost in 1895, nearly a crore of rupees. In the despatch already referred to, the Government of India, accordingly, observed as follows: "Everything connected with war material now costs more than it did, and speaking in a general way, larger supplies have to be obtained. So long as military science progresses, so long will the cost of material increase, and add to our military expenditure." And verily it has been increasing as each military budget informs us.

From the foregoing remarks it will be evident that in no way is the amalgamation scheme beneficial to the country. On the contrary, it is a huge millstone hung round poor India's neck. It is so heavy as to break its neck one day with the most unimagined consequences. They increase the pay of the European soldier and officer, and straightaway India has to provide from her revenue so much additional expenditure. They increase under some pretext or another the European army, and straightaway India has again to provide a larger charge which may be counted by lakhs. But the story of additional charges of a crushing character does not end here. It should be remembered that every increase in the strength of the European army signifies additional charges for both effective and non-effective services—for pay and allow-

ances, for provisions, for clothing, for stores and war material, for exchange, for mobilisation, for transport service and so on; also for pensions. These are intolerable charges which the army amalgamation scheme has entailed on India during the last 52 years and is still destined to entail till the country is one day relieved of this great incubus.

Such being the case the following extract from the Military despatch of the Government of India of 25th March, 1890, will be perfectly intelligible in reference to its criticism on the unctuous plea, eternally urged by the War Office, that the charges entailed on India are actual cost only and no more. Para 7. "The actual cost to the British exchequer, if calculated by a purely arithmetical method, is undoubtedly the cost of the force in the United Kingdom, which would not need to be kept up if the Empire of India did not exist, and no army had to be maintained in India; but it is nowhere proved that the charges raised on account of that force represent the actual extra cost to the British Exchequer, while there are many other conditions which would have to be considered before this method of calculation could be accepted. The difficulties in the organisation of the British Army, and the necessity for inducing men to join the Army cannot be admitted to arise from the presence of a portion of the Army in India. These difficulties, we apprehend, arose from a variety of causes, which have no direct relation to India. Again, in India Office letter No. 161-W., dated 21st March, 1876, Lord Salisbury

distinctly declined to accept the contention of the War Office on this head. "Nor can we accept", says the Indian Government, without questioning the statement that the Indian drafts are the first reserve for the Indian Army, and that in order to avoid employing these elsewhere, the Home Government pay £50,0000 a year for the army reserve. In the first place, it must be pointed out that the regiments, batteries and drafts, sent out to India are despatched during the whole of the trooping season to supply the places of men being sent home discharged to the reserve or invalided, and to make good the annual waste of life, so that the assumption of the War Office, in assuming that the 11,500 men referred to will be efficient as a "first reserve" for India could hold good only if war were imminent at a particular moment before the commencement of the trooping season. If war broke out after the trooping season had closed, these 11,500 men would not be available as a "first reserve." In the second place, Mr. Stanhope observed in his letter of 14th February, 1888, that "it was far from improbable that the same circumstance which necessitated a mobilisation in India might also render it impossible for this country to part with any considerable portion of the small number of regular troops in the United Kingdom." We infer from this statement that India cannot reckon with certainty on receiving even these 11,500 men in case of emergency. If this inference be correct, then it seems to us it cannot be alleged with accuracy, that the reserve is kept up

because the services of these 11,500 men are hypothecated to India, and generally it appears hardly reasonable to assume that in regulating the strength of the reserve of the British army, the annual drafts for India have been or ought to be counted in fixing the strength of the army reserve. We do not understand that 16,000 men are kept up all the year round; and the army reserve was instituted in order to give the British army a reserve of trained soldiers and to enable a reduced army to be maintained at home in the interests of India were in no way specially considered. And yet it is on the assumption of the character which the Government of India has proved to be inaccurate that the War Office makes an annually exorbitant charge under capitation allowance and pretends to say that the cost is the actual cost when it is nothing of the kind!

The short service system, whereby there is a more rapid change of British troops, has been similarly alleged by the War Office to be a real benefit to India. The Indian Government was able to point out the fallacy of that statement also. Shorter service means more frequent transport service and other larger expenses. It was established, as that authority correctly says, "because men could not be obtained under existing conditions, under the long service system, and that the Government of the day believed that short service with reserves was better suited to the circumstances of the time than the existing system. It was no consideration for the efficiency of the army or India that asked the short service system

and its suitability to the Indian requirements has been gravely questioned on more than one occasion." True, indeed, the short service was introduced because under the industrial condition of England, soldiering had lost all the attraction it had once possessed. The industries and manufactures of Great Britain offer a more remunerative and safe employment compared to the poor and insecure employment of a mere soldier. Had India been allowed to recruit its own European army in this country itself as was the case with the East India Company, no such difficulty would have occurred and the British troops might have been raised at 50 per cent. less cost. To-day recruiting for the territorial army created by Lord Haldane is even more difficult and it is notorious from the immense difficulties recruiting sergeants have met with in their annual compaign of capturing the raw material to be converted or manufactured into "food for powder." The recent organisation of "boy scouts" tells us plainly to what straits the War Minister has been driven to fill up his territorial army to the required strength. In the proportion of the difficulty larger baits by way of pay, bounty, and other doucers have to be offered. All that may be very well for wealthy England but it becomes a crushing burden for poor India.

So far the fact cannot be gainsaid of the grievous consequences that have hitherto flowed, and are still flowing without any check or control, from the unfair and altogether one-sided army amalgamation scheme

of 1859. England is to call for any tune she pleases without let or hindrance and India must pay the piper—that is the greatest iniquity.

CHANGE OF FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES.

We may now turn to the other fundamental cause which has contributed to the growth of military expenditure. In the polity of nations, it is a recognised maxim that expenditure depends on policy. As a government conceives, whether wisely or unwisely need not be considered, what should be its defensive and offensive policy, so are public funds expended in pursuance thereof, very often irrespective of the ability of a people to bear the burden of expenditure. In the debate on the Lords' amendment to the Veto Bill, Lord Haldane said: 'It was perfectly obvious that with every Government the Budget of the year must develop some *policy. The budget of the day was part of the political programme of the year.* With regard to the budget of 1909 I should think that the *governing purpose of that budget was to embody policy*". Continental nations, like Germany, Russia and Austria, with extensive land frontiers and surrounded by warlike neighbours, consider the maintenance of large land forces imperative for purposes either of repelling invasion or taking the offensive, provoked or unprovoked. On the other hand, a nation situated as the English, surrounded on all sides by sea, and having no land frontiers at all, has to maintain a large navy both for attack and defence. Again, there is a

country like France with three large seaboards and also an extensive land frontier beyond which are militant neighbours. Such a country has to maintain both a powerful army and navy. Thus the policy of each country, according to its physical and other conditions, dictates whether, and what sum it should spend on the army or the navy or both. The expenditure, however, may be reasonable, and within the ability of the people to bear it or it may be most burdensome entailing heavy taxation which may be deemed intolerable. All depends for the time being on the views of statesmen at the helm of Government. Men imbued with the spirit of Spread-eaglism or Chauvinism or Imperialism may maintain forces so large as to entail an exceedingly heavy expenditure. While there may be persons at the head of State who may hold more pacific views, intent on productive rather than unproductive expenditure, and fully alive to the ability of the taxpayers to bear the burden. These would incur a moderate expenditure for the maintenance of the army and the navy. Sometimes this policy wholly depends on the character of the head of the State alone, be he Kaiser or Tsar or Emperor whose will is law. With a military despot as such the burdens are more or less most grievous.

India is no exception to this general rule. The Indian Government changes from time to time. One adopts a wise policy of neutrality and pacific intentions towards its near and distant neighbours, and therefore maintains a force which is the least costly.

But another succeeds and lays down a policy of an altogether opposite character under a variety of pretexts and keeps up an army, the cost of which is exceedingly intolerable to the taxpayer. Apart from the colour of the changing administrations, there is the subordination of the administration itself to the Secretary of State. That functionary, in his turn, has to acquiesce in the decision of the British Cabinet of which he is a member. The Cabinet may decide on a particular line of army policy to be pursued for India. It may happen that such a policy may be fraught with no advantage to the country. All the same he must acquiesce in it. If his conscience would not permit of such acquiescence he might resign to give place to another who would be sufficiently pliant. Thus to the original evil of the policy which the Indian administration itself might adopt at a time there is the added evil just referred to arising from India's condition as a dependency of England. It is right, therefore, to say that India is in reference to army expenditure, between the upperstone of the Cabinet at home and the netherstone of the Indian Government for the time being at Calcutta.

THE FORWARD SCHOOL.

Instances may now be recalled how the Military policy pursued by the Indian Government has led sometimes to economy but oftener to large and burdensome expenditure on the army. It is well known, that tranquillity had been restored after the dark events of 1857. Sir John Lawrence, who was the

Viceroy from 1864 to 1869, firmly maintained a pacific policy towards the tribes and powers beyond India's natural line of defence and was never tempted by any Chauvinistic spirit to unprovoked aggression. That was recognised as a wise and statesmanlike policy conducive not only to peaceful relations on the border, but to greater domestic progress of a useful character. But there was at the time a school in England, led by Sir Henry Rawlinson, formerly a British ambassador at the Court of Persia, and later on a valiant member of the India Council, who from 1855 had striven most sedulously to push India's boundary beyond its natural lines, with the deliberate intention of ultimately acquiring Baluchistan and Afghanistan. That school, owing to the events of 1857, had receded somewhat in the background, but was making strenuous efforts in 1864 to revive the old projects originally put forward by General Jacob and Sir Henry Green two very able "frontier" officers. That school was called the "Forward school," and, thanks mainly to the agitation led by Sir Henry Rawlinson, it condemned Sir John Lawrence's pacific policy. It was nicknamed the policy of "masterly inactivity". "Masterly statesmanship" should be the more appropriate epithet seeing how that statesmanship, so well directed by Sir John Lawrence, was continued by his successors till the Viceroyalty of the Marquis of Ripon, barring that of Lord Lytton. Each firmly resisted all attempts, overt and covert, made by divers means by the Forward School to give a fillip to their pet project of expansion

and aggression. In the Council of Sir John Lawrence there was that soldier statesman—no other than Sir William Mansfield, afterwards the first Lord Sandhurst, whose scathing minute against the spreadeagle policy so forcibly advocated by Sir Henry Rawlinson, may still be read not only with interest but instruction. Both the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief were convinced by their knowledge and experience of the true condition of frontier affairs, and even the first important advance of Russia in Central Asia as signalised by the occupation of Khiva, that it would be most mischievous to the interests of India ever to succumb to the seductive, but by no means wise or statesmanlike, policy of the fire-eating forwards who contemplated on some suitable opportunity to extend the thin red line of the map of India to the Oxus and the Pamirs on one side and to Kandahar and Herat on the other.

THE POLICY OF GLORY AND GUNPOWDER.

The reception of the embassy of Russians at Kabul by Shere Ali in 1875—6 was the first opportunity the Forward School had of pushing their design. And luckily for them, but most unluckily for India, there was at the time at home a Jingo Government in office, at the head of which was Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, who from his inner consciousness had evolved what has since been known as "the scientific frontier"—that is, such a fluctuating frontier that the more you tried to make it scientific by pushing it forward, the more you shifted it nearer the

territories of friendly neighbours for stripping them naked of their vineyards. Lord Northbrook was asked to find some *casus belli* with the Amir and provoke hostilities. That statesman, with a single eye to the interests of India, and with a profound spirit of righteousness worthy of an old fashioned Whig of the days of the seventies, with its robust Liberalism, sternly declined to comply with Mr. Disraeli's mandate. He courageously withstood it till the importunities became so pressing that he deemed it expedient rather to lay down his high office than be a party to the crime of unprovoked aggression against the Amir. Lord Lytton, his successor, came carrying in his pocket the new policy of Glory and Gunpowder on which his great *guru* had set his heart. Within eighteen months of his arrival, the fat was put into the fire. The match to the gunpowder, as wistfully desired by his guru, was ignited. Of course, there was a conflagration. But we need not further go into the history of the origin of the Afghan War. All that I would request you to remember at this stage is the change of policy—from masterly inactivity to unprovoked aggression resulting in the unrighteous war against the Amir Shere Ali. The Jingo Government at home with the reddest of red "Imperialists" in the person of Mr. Disraeli as Prime Minister, and the Viceroy in India as his obedient instrument, the bold scheme of the Forward School was actively launched. It is a truism to say that that policy entailed untold burdens on India by way of military expenditure till the 2nd Afghan War lasted,

bringing little or no credit either to British statesmanship or British arms.

Happily for India, there was a change of Government in England in 1880 which, true to its Liberal traditions, had in opposition severely condemned the war and the original unrighteous policy which provoked it. With Mr. Gladstone at the helm of the new Government peace was soon restored, a relief was afforded to the revenues of India by a contribution of 5 millions sterling from the British Treasury, and a most broad-minded, sympathetic and conscientious Viceroy, a Liberal of Liberals, was sent to rule over the people.

During Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty, we witnessed the re-establishment once more of the old and wise policy of Sir John Lawrence, namely, of confining within the natural lines of the country's defence. Meanwhile, the whole field of military expenditure, as presented by the light of the stirring events of the immediate past had been just surveyed by the Simla Army Commission and Lord Ripon's Government fully supported its recommendations.

But with the close of Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty, Sir John Lawrence's policy, it is rueful to state, also came to a final close. The so-called "Imperialism" was slowly coming to the front even in old England, and India got her first "Imperial" Viceroy in the person of Lord Dufferin trained and versed both in Oriental and Occidental diplomacy which might well be characterised as Jesuitical. A change of Government,

soon after his arrival here, took place. Lord Randolph Churchill, with his Imperialistic ideas, became Secretary of State. He completely overthrew the old policy. At each end, say, at Westminster and Calcutta, there was to be found at the helm of affairs a person deeply imbued with the spirit of Spread-eaglism. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce was vigorously plying its suit for the opening up of Upper Burmah by any means. It was urged that British merchants in Mandalay were molested and otherwise obstructed. Exaggerated, if not fallacious, accounts of the so-called anarchical condition of the dominions of King Theebaw were circulated by a venal Press. As a combined result of these events, Lord Randolph Churchill resolved to hoist the British flag at the capital of the Alamporas. The first preliminary step was taken, namely, of augmenting the Indian Army. In defiance of the recommendation of the Simla Army Commission that 60,000 British and 120,000 Indian troops would amply suffice to meet all emergencies and requirements, internal and external, that masterful Secretary issued his mandate to increase the forces by 10,000 European and 20,000 Indian soldiers. Thus the Jingo policy was fully set in motion and it is a truism to say that since that time, more or less with temporary interruption, that policy has been allowed to have its free sway in India. It was brought in evidence before the Welby Commission by Sir David Barbour and Sir Auckland Colvin, two of the ablest Civilian Finance Ministers we have had, that the military policy, leading

to large military expenditure, happens to be greatly in the ascendant when there is a strong Commander-in-Chief and a weak Viceroy or when both are strong. Conversely, with a strong Viceroy, full of pacific intentions, the military policy receives a considerable check.

Thus, it has happened that every impetus given to the military policy has constantly disturbed our finances. A budget balanced with some care and caution has been converted into one of deficit. Observed Sir A. Colvin : "One disturbing element in Indian finance is the constant frontier trouble—small expeditions with a nearly balanced budget may just have the effect of creating a deficit." And speaking of expeditions generally, he further observed that they are "inherent in the Indian system as that they have been more frequent of late in consequence of the adoption of a certain policy." Indeed, he emphatically declared that the net result of a strong military policy was the wrecking of Indian Finance. And the late Sir Edwin Collen was obliged under the cross-examination of Lord Welby to admit that "everything depends on an economic Viceroy."

It is superfluous to say that more or less the military policy held its ascendency during the Viceroyalty of Lords Lansdowne and Elgin. There was the Kashmir imbroglio and the subsequent occupation of Gilgit, Hunza and Nagyar. The Chitral expedition followed and later on the inglorious expedition to Tirah. All these were the fruitful products of that

ascendency. But the policy became exceedingly mischievous during the masterful and "strenuous" Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. No Viceroy came to India more steeped in the reddest of red Imperialism than he. It eventually led to that so-called "peaceful" expedition to Lhassa, with the ulterior object of threatening China in South-west Yunan. His ludicrous Spread-eaglism and pompous Cæsarian attitude in the Persian Gulf is well-known. In his person Lord Curzon demonstrated to the hilt the truth of the statements made by high officials of State before the Welby Commission, that Indian finance was liable to the greatest disturbance with a strong Commander-in-Chief and a too militant Viceroy. But for the fat profits chiefly derived from the enormous coinage of rupees, the financial disturbances would have been seen at a very early date. The taxation imposed last year might have been earlier imposed by Lord Curzon himself. His surpluses were in reality windfalls and spent after the manner of spendthrifts, though we must acknowledge the remission of the salt duty. No doubt Lord Kitchener fell out with Lord Curzon, but the quarrel had reference rather to an administrative than a military problem. The autocratic Viceroy could not brook another Turk near his throne. But in the matter of the new fangled organisation carried out by Lord Kitchener entailing further permanent burden on the revenue, Lord Curzon was one with him. To add to India's misfortunes, there unluckily happened throughout the three Viceroyalties that she had weak

Secretaries of State, with no grit, to check and control the strong military policy which was having its full and free sway in the Viceregal Council. Thus, the policy having been what I have described above, is it a matter of surprise that from the days of Lord Dufferin to those of Lord Curzon, military expenditure, as already shewn in the early part of this paper, was allowed to mount upwards by leaps and bounds?

WILL THERE BE ANY MATERIAL RETRENCHMENT?

I think, I, have fairly demonstrated how far two fundamental causes have largely operated in the growth of army expenditure; firstly, the mischievous amalgamation scheme, and secondly, the equally mischievous "forward policy" of both the Government of India and the Home Government since 1885. Unless, therefore, the two principal causes which have contributed to the increase of 11·61 crores of rupees from 1885-86 are removed partially or wholly, I for one am not sanguine of any substantial reduction of military expenditure. We may take it for granted that the able officers at the head of the Finance Department will conscientiously discharge their duty, minutely examine the increases under each head of the grant for the annual army services, and recommend such reduction and economy as to them may seem reasonably compatible with "efficiency", whatever may be understood by that word. We may consider ourselves lucky if they can show a saving of half a crore if ever so much. But assuming that it comes to that amount, we may inquire how long will it last and how soon

may it be absorbed by fresh recurring expenditure. Experience informs us that all this labour which the Finance Department may undergo and all the savings they may effect will be so much labour lost and wasted. Reductions there have been in the past, but they have been uniformly swept away by the force of the irresistible tide of military requirements. To take the latest and most striking instance. It would be in your recollection that the Welby Commission had recommended that India should be allowed a reduction in its Home military charges to the extent of £2,50,000. But before two years had elapsed the War Office jumped a mine on the Government by saddling our finances with £7,86,000 of annual permanent expenditure by way of increased soldiers' pay. That fresh burden would have been impossible had there been no amalgamation scheme.

Then as to the policy. If you take into consideration that the new policy of aggression and expansion commenced with the augmentation of 30,000 soldiers, you will find that the additional cost by way of small wars, expeditions, mobilisation, up-to-date ordnance and other arms of precision, war material &c., have absorbed many a lakh of rupees every year. In reality the military candle has been kept burning on both these accounts without a thought of the burden on the inarticulate tax-payer. On the one hand, the amalgamation scheme entails from time to time a burden on our far from elastic revenue which the Government of India is powerless to prevent, and on

the other hand, there is the ascendency of the military element in the Viceregal Government which leads to other increases of expenditure. It would be obvious, therefore, that until the amalgamation scheme, I repeat, is denounced in Parliament by some member of the vast military knowledge and experience of the late distinguished Sir Charles Dilke, and another of an equitable character is substituted instead there can be no hope of any cessation of additional expenditure of a permanent character. You will never be able to keep it rigidly stationary at a certain figure as was the case from 1861-62 to 1884-85, with slight interruption. Policy also must be modified. That can partly be accomplished in two ways by our Indian representatives in the Viceregal Council. Firstly, by vigorously supporting the Government of India which for years past has been unsuccessfully remonstrating with the Home Government in respect of charges dictated purely by Imperial interest in which India has no concern or next to none. Secondly, by a vigilant watch over all branches of military expenditure incurred in India which under existing circumstances may be deemed voidable.

REDUCED EXPENDITURE POSTULATES CHANGE OF POLICY.

In reference to policy it may be of importance to draw your attention to the very pertinent observations made by the Government of India in their despatch of 25th March, 1890, to which I have made reference in the sequel.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, but it may be fearlessly said that the Government is no way nearer to-day in successfully achieving its object than it was twenty years ago.

SIMLA ARMY COMMISSION'S REPORTS.

I now come to my last point, namely, the proposed reduction in the strength of the army itself. I need not want, gentlemen, to inform you that if even half of the additional troops which were increased in 1885, is reduced, there would result a substantial saving which would afford great relief to the revenue and which might be very well utilised for some of the most deserving and trying objects of public welfare. But before I further descant on this part of my subject, which is of immediate practical urgency I would detain you for a few minutes by taking you back to the report of the Simla Army Commission as it is of the highest importance in the consideration of the proposed reduction.

In its letter to the President appointing the Commission the Government declared the main object for which it was instituted, namely, "to assist Government in determining what share of the unavoidable reduction can be borne by the military charges without injury to the general efficiency of the army, and in what manner such savings can best be effected. In order that the Government may be put in a position to decide on this most important question, investigation of your Commission must be comprehensive and exhaustive, embracing in fact the whole subject of

military organisation and expenditure; you are requested to study carefully the improvements in administration which have been recently introduced into the British and other European armies and to consider how far such changes can be advantageously introduced into the Indian armies. The great problem of modern military organisation is to provide the largest and most efficient force in war with the smallest permanent peace establishment and expenditure; and it is to a solution of this problem that the labours of your Commission must specially be directed." The Commission responded to this reference as follows:—

"Nearly two-thirds of the border of the Indian Empire is protected by the sea. So long as Great Britain is the mistress of the seas, the seacoast of India is protected by the fleet of England and the Indian army need provide only for defences at four or five seaports. The external foes which the Indian army may have to meet on its land frontier are, Russia and Afghanistan on the north-west; Nepaul or Bhootan on the north-east; wild tribes of the Assam, Cachar and Arracan border on the east; and Burma on the south-east. It is not probable that India will come in contact with China or Persia on the land frontier of British India for sometime to come. For operations against Russia or Afghanistan assisted by Russia, a force of two army corps of 50,000 to 60,000 fighting men might possibly be necessary. None has ever suggested that the army of India should be maintained at a strength necessary to put into the field a larger

force than this. Two divisions of all arms would probably suffice for the requirements of a war with Nepaul; while, against other external foes a single division of all arms would, if communications were mentioned, be enough."

It will be noticed that the recommendation of the Army Commission to have 50,000 to 60,000 European and 100,000 to 1,20,000 Indian troops was made after due deliberation and a most cautious and careful survey of the conditions on the frontier and the then position of Russian advance in Central Asia. The recommendation was agreed to by Lord Ripon's Government. But on his retirement and on the change in the Ministry in 1885, the Forward School found in Lord Randolph Churchill an active advocate to carry out its design. His mandate went forth to increase the European troops by 10,000 and Indian by 20,000. Nothing special had happened on the frontier and no change in the attitude of Russia had occurred to justify such an increase. Two of the members of Lord Dufferin's Government were so convinced of not only the non-utility of the increase but of its possible evils that they placed on record their trenchant dissent which bears date 14th August, 1885. Both the late Sir Auckland Colvin, that brilliant administrator, who was then Finance Minister and Mr. (now Sir Courteney) Ilbert observed in their joint minute that "there seems every reason to apprehend that the increase of our forces beyond the needs enumerated by the army commission

may prove a weapon less of defence than of aggression. We are of opinion that as no circumstances have arisen which from a military point of view have not already been foreseen and guarded against the proposal to increase the strength of the army of 27,000 men should be negatived. We are further of opinion that it may lead to the advocacy and possibly to the adoption of projects for the extension of our present frontier." And again: "It has been already pointed out that the existence of such a force would be no mean agent in bringing about the very risk which it is meant to obviate. A standing army which is larger than is necessary for home requirements will be a temptation, and almost an irresistible weapon of offence beyond the border." How prophetic was the warning will be readily admitted when we recall the events which have taken place on the frontiers since 1885. Who is unaware of the acquisition of Upper Burmah, of the occupation of Gilgit, Hunza and Nagyar which eventually culminated in the expedition to Chitral. Later on there were those expeditions in the Malakand Pass and the territories of the Afridis and Oekzais. Still later on there was that disastrous expedition to Tirah. All these have cost millions of money which might have been well avoided. But the addition to the forces was, as the two members of the Government wisely forewarned, a direct incentive to frontier expeditions and land-grabbing. The plea has been put forward that they were all necessary in order that the frontiers may be kept free of turbulent

tribes and Russian intrigues and complications. Russia had all through been held up as a bogey and Imperial interests were urged for the purpose as if the quarrels of Great Britain with Russia on the European Continent had any concern with India to justify an unnecessarily large standing army on the Indian border. The Government of India felt sore on this point. It had more than once remonstrated with the Home Government but in vain. In one of these most important despatches they were constrained to observe as follows :—"Millions of money have been spent on increasing the army in India, on armaments and on fortifications to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies, or to prevent the incursions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East. The scope of all those great and costly measures reaches far beyond Indian limits and the policy which dictates them is an Imperial policy. We claim, therefore, that in the maintenance of British forces in this country a just and even liberal view should be taken of the charges which should be legitimately made against Indian revenues." But all through the remonstrances and appeals of the Indian Government have gone in vain while many more millions on arms and ammunitions, mobilisation, fortification, strategic railways and a variety of other objects too numerous to be detailed here, have been incurred from year to year, till the entire military expenditure, exclusive of strategic railways, stood at 28·66 crores in 1909-10.

OPINION OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE WELBY COMMISSION ON ARMY CHARGES FOISTED ON INDIA.

I hope I have now made it clear how far the *policy* pursued by the Imperial Government has been largely contributory to the expenditure which now absorbs the whole of the net land revenue of the empire. So able and levelheaded a member of the Royal Commission on Indian expenditure as the late Sir James Peile, in his separate minute to the Majority Report, has observed : " It is needful to remember that the foreign military policy pursued in India, while it certainly aims at the safety of India, is also the policy of a great European State, and therefore a policy of mixed elements. The dictum that India should contribute part of the cost of British military operations in which India has a direct and substantial interest may easily be turned round. Here there is a partnership which implies joint objects and interests, and that I think is a reason for great consideration in dealing with the home effective charges." Again, the late Mr. Buchanan, who was also a member of the Commission, and became afterwards Uuder-Secretary of State for India, observed in his own minute that " in so far as the military defence of India is concerned, India pays everything and the United Kingdom nothing, and yet the maintenance of the military defence of India is one of the greatest of Imperial questions. The military strength of India is the main factor in the strength of our Empire in

the East. In virtue of that strength Great Britain is a great Asiatic Power."

PRIMA FACIE GROUNDS FOR RECONSIDERING PRESENT ARMY STRENGTH.

The question then remains whether the time has not come when the entire policy of the Imperial Government, so far as it is a great Asiatic power, should not be impartially considered on its own merits. If that policy is to be firmly maintained, then how may the growing expenditure be kept under check and control? Indian revenues, as we are all aware, are subject to the greatest fluctuations either on account of physical calamities or external economics and politics which the polity of the Imperial Government force on this dependency. At present the Indian Government is sorely tried as to how to balance the two sides of the annual account. With the threatened extinction of the opium revenue, the position two years hence is certain to be more embarrassed than it is at present. Either enhanced or new or both kinds of taxation will become inevitable or ways and means of retrenchment must be found to bring about an equilibrium in the balance sheet. As far as retrenchment has to be considered, I do not think that there can be any two opinions about military expenditure being the first which ought to be taken on hand. We may economise civil expenditure as best we may; but it is neither so burdensome nor so crushing, let alone its productivity, as military. Having regard to the fact that the Russian bogey has

been dispelled and that there is no reason whatever to apprehend any external attack from that Power on our frontiers in future there is no reason to have such a large standing army as is maintained at present. Moreover, many more miles of railways, stategic included, have been constructed at the expense of crores of rupees which have vastly facilitated transport and mobilisation. That fact ought to add additional weight towards the consideration of the question of retrenchment. There is, again, a considerable force of armed police which did not exist when the Simla Army Commission made the report. Next, the reserves and the Volunteer force also have been greatly augmented. Thus view, as you may, the position at present from any point you are irresistibly led to the conclusion that on every ground a case for retrenchment has been made out. Even so redoubtable an organ of the military bureaucracy as the *Pioneer* observed in its issue of 7th July as follows: "The argument that because a certain establishment laid down fifty years ago was appropriate to the wants of the Indian Empire, this estimate can never be liable to modification is surely one that could have only been brought forward from a scarcity of better ones. Circumstances are always altering, the balance of power is substantially shifting, the dissolution of old combinations and the formation of new, events in the outside world, such as new railways, new lands, new inventions, not to speak of campaigns and battles in whatever distant lands they may occur, are

continually altering the relations of a country's military resources to the necessities, and making the forces that were ample at one time insufficient at another and *vice versa* * * . The menace that looked so black has rolled away for good, as far as human foresight can go. A strange shift of international politics has brought us into relations of friendliness and common interests with the power who for many long years seemed infallibly destined to close with us in a life and death struggle for the possession of India. Can it be said that the removal of such a weight offers no *prima facie* grounds for a reconsideration of the scale of our own military establishments?" But the Russian bogey having been laid low by the Anglo-Russian agreement, the Forward School is now screaming that China is massing troops on the Nepaul Frontier and that affairs in the Persian Gulf, owing to the construction of the Bagdad railway, demand watchfulness and preparedness! These are two new bogies but they need not frighten anybody. For on the face of it it is absurd to expect China, or for that matter Siam, ever contemplating an attack on the north-east frontier. Says the *Pioneer*: "To suppose that China would contemplate serious hostilities in those remote jungles while she lies open to blows over the heart from the British Navy would be to suppose her statesmen infatuated indeed. Then we are warned about the political situation of the Gulf, but it is not obvious how matters there should affect the Indian Army."

So far these fresh bogies may be at once dismissed from our mind. We need not tarry to consider them for a moment, utterly puerile as they are and opposed to all possibilities. On the other hand, to again quote the Allahabad paper, "it cannot be denied that the internal duties and responsibilities of the Indian Army have lightened very greatly during recent years, firstly, because it has no longer to act as counterpoise to a body more than twice its strength in the shape of the Native States' armies, and partly because of the enormous improvements in communications. In brief, all the evidence seems to indicate a good *prima facie* case for the reopening of the question."

HOW MAY RETRENCHMENT BE EFFECTED?

A *prima facie* case being made out, let us consider how may a reduction in the cost of the Army be affected. There are, I think, only two ways of doing it. Either the Army should be brought down to the strength at which it stood before Lord Randolph Churchill increased it in 1885, or if that is not to be, then justice demands that the burden on the Indian revenues be lightened by a fair and reasonable contribution yearly from the Imperial Exchequer in consideration of the unquestionable service the retention of the present standing Army of India renders to the Imperial Government, namely, in maintaining its supremacy in the East as a Great Asiatic Power.

As to the first alternative, even the *Pioneer* recommends it; but it would propose a reduction in

the strength of the Indian troops alone. This is opposed by the unanimous voice of the Indian Press which voices enlightened Indian public opinion. For just consider what an Indian soldier costs and what a European. It appears from the Finance and Revenue Accounts for 1909—10 that the total cost of the European Army, consisting of 21,01 officers and 59,111 warrant officers and soldiers, in all 61,222, is a sum of Rupees 8·60, crore Rupees by way of regimental pay and allowances, provision, and the charges paid in England. The total cost of the Indian Army consisting of 2,372 officers and 127,603 warrant officers and men, in all 129,975, came to 6·40 crore Rupees for regimental pay and allowances and provision. Thus each European costs 1,404 Rupees and each Indian 492; in other words, it costs 3 times more to maintain European troops than Indian. If the strength of the European is brought back to that at which it stood up till 1885, say 50,000, the saving by the reduction of 10,000, in all now would mean 1·40 Crore Rupees. To obtain the same retrenchment of 1·40 Crore Rupees would require the reduction of 28.000 Indian troops. Is it not wiser to curtail that limb of the Army which is needless and most costly? If, however, there is to be a reduction both in the European and the Indian Army, then it would be well to maintain a force of 50,000 for the former and 100,000 for the latter. The saving then would be in round figures nearly 3 crores—a very substantial saving indeed giving the greatest relief to the revenues and relieving the tax-payers from any fresh taxation which

might be otherwise inevitable. With even a reduction of 5,000 European and 10,000 Indian soldiers the saving will be about 1¼ Crore Rupees.

Of course, the *Times* and other Chauvinistic papers in London, and their counterparts here, have been screaming aloud against the reduction of a single European soldier, but it is to be hoped that the prudent and economic Government of Lord Hardinge will not be deterred by that irrational hue and cry from courageously facing the financial situation in the face and rendering that just financial relief to India which is called for. There is the greater hope of this, seeing how vigorously has the Under-Secretary of State in his budget speech laid emphasis on army retrenchment. By all means maintain the basal principle of having one European soldier for every two Indian. But it would be most unjust that while a European costs Rs. 1,404 per annum and an Indian only Rs. 492, to curtail the strength of the latter only and wholly maintain that of the former. That would be a crying injustice and otherwise impolitic from all points of view. But if the Chauvinist organs of British public opinion are anxious to see no European soldier reduced, then, they ought to be prepared in all conscience and equity to recommend to the British Treasury to bear a part of the cost of the European army in India, seeing that it is partially maintained in Imperial interests alone.

This brings me to the second alternative of the contribution to the Indian revenues from the British

Treasury. So unbiassed and fair-minded a member of the Welby Commission as Mr. Buchanan observed in his minute to the Majority Report that "on general grounds and from our recent experience of the help that India's military strength can give to the Empire it is established beyond question that India's strength is the Empire's strength, and that in discharging these Imperial duties India has a fair claim that part of the burden should be borne by the Imperial exchequer. There may be difficulties as to the method of making the charge and the amount. As to the equity of the claim on the part of India there can be no doubt." I am sure every enlightened and fair-minded person, be he European or Indian, will endorse the justice of the suggestion which Mr. Buchanan had made but which, of course, did not commend itself to the majority of his colleagues. But the cogency of his reasoning and the fairness of his proposal must be deemed to stand as good, if not better, to-day than they were first made fourteen years ago.

CONCLUSION.

Summarising, I may say that no substantial retrenchment can be effected in the Army expenditure unless the strength of the entire force, European and Indian, is brought back to what it was in 1885. There are most cogent reasons for such a reduction, seeing that the conditions which prevailed from 1885 till the date of the Anglo-Russian convention have altogether changed for the better. There can be no fear of

external aggression from any European or even Asiatic Power, either from the north-west or north-east. . The internal duties of the troops have been considerably lightened by the increased reserves, by the larger volunteer force, by the armed native police and by the trained Army of Native States. Thirdly, there has been enormous improvements and facilities of communication. Fourthly, more fortifications, military defence works, and strategic railways have been constructed. Lastly, the army to-day is infinitely more efficient everyway in arms and accoutrements than it was in 1885. Each and every one of these are strong reasons in favour of a reduction. Apart from that it is highly imperative to modify considerably the Army Amalgamation scheme of 1859 which has been the perennial source of increased Army charges for European troops, not infrequently of a character to embarrass the Indian exchequer as the Government of India has to its cost felt time out of number. It is an unequal partnership of a most burdensome character and withal so unjust that it offers next to no voice to the Indian Government to resist crushing charges imposed from time to time. The scheme, from the very first, has been condemned by experts some of whom have not been slow to observe that it is a convenient instrument for the War Office when opportunity offers to serve the exigencies of British estimates. Such an one-sided and grossly iniquitious scheme needs either to be ended or mended. And, lastly, the Imperial policy in reference to the maintenance of its supremacy as an

Asiatic Power in the East requires to be so far modified as to diminish to a large extent the financial liabilities and obligations it imposes—liabilities and obligations which should equitably fall on the British Treasury and against which the Government of India has persistently protested and appealed to the Imperial Government but hitherto in vain.

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